



LB 1069 Testimony
Carna Pfeil, Interim Executive Director

Feb. 4, 2014

- States regulate the offering of distance education in widely varying ways. Right now, each higher education institution that offers online education needs to check with every state in which it has students to determine if approval by that state is required. This is a cumbersome, time-consuming, and often expensive process. Since 2011, several higher education organizations have worked together to develop a better approach, based on reciprocity agreements. Those agreements have now been finalized and states are beginning the process of entering into these agreements.
- During the 2013 session there was legislation adopted that allows the State to participate in reciprocity agreements and for the Commission to administer these agreements in Nebraska. This will enable our state's colleges and universities to more efficiently offer their courses and programs online to students in states that participate in the reciprocity agreements. Nebraska institutions will save thousands of dollars by not having to gain approval from every state in which they offer online education.
- The Commission, on behalf of the State, will soon have the opportunity to offer Nebraska institutions the opportunity to participate in these reciprocity agreements, if they so choose. A majority of Nebraska postsecondary institutions – including the University of Nebraska – have expressed interest in doing so.
- Before that can happen, however, three technical changes must be made to the statutes. A portion of LB 1069 addresses these technical changes, which deal with a sector of higher education not included in last session's legislation – private postsecondary career schools. If these changes are not made, the Commission cannot enter into reciprocity agreements, which would deny all other Nebraska institutions the opportunity to benefit.